

KARO-ECHO Membership Meeting

November 9, 2020

via Zoom

Attendees

NI6A	Don Simon
KJ6AAT	David Swanson
KE6BEE	Howdy Goudey
KN6BUY	Tom Fattaruso
KN6CMP	Blake Yeaman
KN6CMR	Susan Yeaman
KK6GIO	Larry Vanselow
KM6HBO	Jamuel Starkey
KM6HFT	Curt Smith
KJ6IUV	Frans Kuypers
K6KOP	Jerry Michaels
KK6NDF	Hal Graboske
KC6OBK	Marian Gade
KK6RED	Diane Richwine
KJ6SWK	Annette McCoubrey
KM6TBG	Kristen Gates
KM6UCF	Natalie DeJarlais
KJ6WSS	Jay Fenton
KK6ZPM	Karen Leong Fenton

Don (NI6A) moved to approve the October minutes; Larry (KK6GIO) seconded. All approved.

Annette (KJ7SWK) moved to approve the November agenda; Jay (KJ6WSS) seconded. All approved.

New attendee: Kristen Gates - KM6TBG

A longtime resident of Point Richmond, Kristen participates in 1st Wednesday nets and recently upgraded to a general license. She is involved in CERT and is already a KARO-ECHO member, but this was her first meeting.

Announcement re: Albany CERT: Blake has accepted appointment as moderator for Albany CERT, and Susan has agreed to lead Emergency Communications.

October SET

Howdy led a review of the October SET.

- Jay provided equipment to Susan & Natalie
- Howdy noticed a tendency to use FCC call signs rather than tactical call signs. It is preferable to use tactical call signs because operators will swap out in an actual emergency. Tactical call signs help continuity with roles; the focus is on the role rather than a particular person.
- Participation of neighborhood nets in the SET: EC9 did a great job of incorporating the neighborhood net. The newsletter contains a link to the EC9 debriefing. There were nine GMRS/FRS operators who checked into the EC9 neighborhood net on FRS/GMRS channel 15. The Net Control was located at Tassajara Park (EC9 staging area) at dual-service comm hub. Mike, WQGU363/KM6CXI was net control. Don, NI6A/WQXJ891 was on the hamnet side of the message center. Four messages originated from the blocks, of which two were routed to the EOC via hamnet. In addition the prepared message to the EOC was also sent as well as a QST request for a crowbar, which was answered by EC8. It worked well; four messages were passed, two of which went to EOC.
- Upon successfully receiving a message, say “copy” or “QSL.” Avoid unnecessary repetition of the message.
- Marian (KC6OBK) recommends that when sending a message, we go half as fast as seems reasonable. This results in fewer fills.
- We discussed the best way to address a word count issue during message handling.
 - Listen to traffic nets to hear examples of how traffic is handed.
 - Letter/number combinations (*e.g.*, “mixed group Echo Charlie 7”) = one word.
 - Abbreviations (*e.g.*, “letter group India Charlie”) = one word.
 - Pause and *listen* after sending each batch of five words.
 - One can ask the final (5th) word in each line.
 - Another possibility is to phonetically state the first letter of each word. It was pointed out that repeating the actual words might be just as efficient, though it wouldn’t resolve split words.

Neighborhood Nets

Don reported on EC9, which meets on First Wednesdays. There is a high degree of participation, though at the last check-in, only 4 of the 13 check-ins were from EC9.

Don wrote a terrific summary of EC9, which is providing an example of what a good neighborhood net should do. Don pointed out that we should make our expertise available to the neighborhood nets, but that we should focus on ham radios.

Don agreed to send a copy of the summary to Diane & David.

Karen suggested a Wednesday El Cerrito/Kensington-wide net via Zoom so that everyone meets each other. This is a proposal that she’d like to develop. Interested parties should contact a KE representative, Area Coordinator, CERT lead, or block lead. The feedback can then go to the board.

Jerry asked about the FRS Channel for the area. The Marina Bay group is using channel 15, but they're testing 19 and 17. It's best to scroll up and down on the radio to find them; they're trying to find a stable frequency. Albany CERT will use 19; Oakland is using 17; EC9 uses 15.

2021 Officer Election

The annual election for President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary will occur in December.

The nominating committee will work on candidate nominations during November. The VP position has been vacant, and the Secretary position is open for 2021. Committee volunteers:

- Don
- Tom
- Jamuel
- Marian
- Annette
- [Natalie later joined.]

Ham Radio Licensing Fee Increase Proposal

David Swanson informed the group that the FCC is proposing to raise fees on ham radio licensing: \$50 for a license or upgrade; vanity call sign \$50; renewals \$50. 11/15 is the last day to comment to the FCC. This is likely to discourage emergency radio use and encourage illegal radio use. Hal asked David for a message to send to the KE membership.

On the ARRL website, see [FCC fee increase](#). Don will ensure that the information goes out to the membership.

KARO-ECHO Disaster Communications Plan

For an overview of what our group tries to achieve, see the KARO-ECHO Communications Plan on the website at <https://tinyurl.com/y3nchaym>

Also the KARO-ECHO Field Handbook on the website (bit.ly/2KKG1Xe) describes how we achieve this: In essence, we supply disaster communications if asked. Our main stakeholders are the El Cerrito & Kensington communities and the El Cerrito Fire Department. The KE Field Operations Handbook, which follows ARES and ARRL guidelines, is the manual for getting set up. First, we secure the safety of our own families; then we go to 146.415 and await instruction.

Ideas:

- Hams could shadow public works and service workers who do not have radios in their vehicles.
- Mutual Aid Teams (MAT) - As a KAROECHO MAT we would need an MOU to work with other jurisdictions, but West County ARES/RACES has done this in the past. As it is now, members are free to volunteer as individuals to help neighboring

ham Emcomm needs during disasters when requested.

In case of an emergency (large earthquake, climate chaos, power outages, other emergencies), we will self-activate. The first to arrive becomes net control. There will be alerts via Nixle, CWS, etc. Howdy pointed out that some of these emergencies may not require ham radio (*e.g.*, chemical spill).

Howdy has appointed Don to be the Assistant Emergency Coordinator. (AEC)

Cell towers: Some are being embedded into the city on light poles, church steeples, etc., which makes it harder to deploy emergency backup systems.

KCBS is the AM/FM radio to tune to in an emergency.

We might want to consider group sms texting as well; we could request specific permission to include people.

The meeting was adjourned.